



CMI

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Civil Society Dialogue Network Meeting

The UN Guidance for Effective Mediation: Translating the Fundamentals into EU Practice

Thursday, 14 November 2013, Brussels

Key Recommendations

This document contains the key recommendations which were made by participants in the CSDN meeting **The UN Guidance for Effective Mediation: Translating the Fundamentals into EU Practice** and summarises their reflections and does not represent the views of the organisers. A full meeting report will follow.

Inclusivity – Why and for whom?

The international community should:

- Support the development of a common understanding of the conflict context, including the various actors involved, their position in the conflict and their objectives;
- Address the impact that proscription of non-state armed groups has on their ability to be involved in peace processes;
- Take stock of the elements of successful, inclusive peace processes, which are often locally led, focus on less ambitious objectives and do not designate a winner;
- Facilitate the identification and appointment of a lead mediator in context where there are too many actors.

Lead mediators should:

- Consider that while an inclusive approach may make the process more difficult to conclude, inclusivity is also the basis for longer-lasting peace agreements;
- Acknowledge that the application of the principle of inclusivity is context-specific and that there is a need both for efforts to look at how it may be applied but also flexibility in doing so;
- Base the assessment of inclusivity on the representativeness and legitimacy of the different parties involved in the process and who have a stake in its outcome;
- Consider how inclusivity can be ensured through sequencing, meaning that different groups are included at different stages of the process;

With the support of:



- Encourage the inclusion of civil society and marginalised groups in line with the principle of inclusivity and to prevent the process from being hampered by grievances at a later stage;
- Insist on the inclusion of women as systematically as possible, using creative options and mechanisms to adapt this principle to different contexts, led always by the demands and views of women on the ground;
- Consider the link between preparedness and inclusivity: if parties are not adequately prepared for the process, then their inclusion is tokenistic; in their efforts to promote inclusivity, mediators should therefore spend more time on supporting groups to understand the process and formulate their objectives;
- Identify the different kinds of expertise required in the mediation process and ensure that they are represented in the mediator's team;
- Secure the support of powerful external actors even if they are not directly part of the process;
- Resist pressure from 'Friends of' peace processes and other external actors to avoid rushing the negotiation before a deal is ready.

The EU should:

- Appoint staff to EU delegations in conflict-affected areas who have expertise in mediation;
- Actively support the involvement of civil society organisations in peace processes, especially when the government(s) involved are reluctant to do so;
- Support the professionalization of mediation expertise among the different constituencies involved including representatives of the security sector to ensure that security-related matters are not left out of the peace process and eventual agreement;
- Use the OSCE Guidance Note on Enhancing Gender Responsive Mediation and the EEAS Factsheet on Women's Participation and Gender as guidelines for peace processes that the EU supports;
- Undertake gendered conflict analysis before engaging in a context;
- Ensure that the inclusion of women in the process is made effective by providing them political access;
- Be ready to take risks and to counter arguments which prevent women's inclusion in processes based on the women's own demands; women want both to maintain their cultural and religious identity and be included and participate fully in political processes;
- Promote more co-operation between the EU and the OSCE, as the latter has more expertise in certain geographic areas and specific fields (such as education and media);
- Be humble regarding the EU's role in mediation processes and creative in supporting them, for instance by enabling other actors to be involved;
- Pay adequate attention to the implementation of peace agreements as this is the phase in which inclusiveness is crucial and where consensus-building is needed; the EU's support to implementation should have the necessary flexibility to allow for projects that are inclusive and can be adapted to changes in context.

Coherence, coordination and complementarity of the mediation effort

The UN should:

- Systematically appoint UN envoys who are willing to work inclusively, including with civil society;
- Ensure that the UN and its representatives are not perceived as dismissive and that they build trust with all actors.

Lead Mediators should:

- Have a clear strategy for involving the various actors;
- Be a contact point for all civil society actors and carve space for them to engage, share analysis and provide input insider or outside the official framework;
- Send clear messages to conflict parties to avoid confusion and mistrust and prevent actors from miscalculating.

The EU should:

- Undertake conflict analysis and coordination with other donors before providing funding and support to avoid duplication and/or harming the process;
- Ensure that the EU's deploys its different mechanisms and tools in a coordinated manner;
- Set better qualitative indicators for effective coordination among civil society organisations, not just quantitative (e.g. numbers of meetings held), to measure the degree of effective coordination;
- Continue sharing and exchanging analysis with civil society including through the network and expertise that Member States have;
- Draw lessons from the transition process in Yemen where the singularity of the process (only one mechanism) and unity of purpose of the international community (a set of agreed goals) is providing a framework for the EU to play a distinctive role in that it is involved in the three different tracks (direct relation with national government through its participation in G10, support to national dialogue and local dialogue initiatives);
- Support efforts of the international community to act coherently and ensure that channels of communication and coordination between international community and conflicting parties work effectively;
- Promote the involvement of external and non-institutional actor such as NGOs at key steps of the process as they bring less political baggage, less economic interests and less conflicting institutional agenda into the conflict;
- Make compliance with the EU guidelines for visibility and communication more flexible when the work supported needs to be confidential as has already happened in some cases;
- Acknowledge that coherence and coordination depend on personalities at least as much as institutional guidance, so recruiting the right kind of people for key positions is important;
- Systematically include mediation in the mandate of staff in EU delegations and CSDP missions in conflict-affected areas and fragile states and provide them with adequate resources and training.

EU Member States specifically should:

- Recognise that for the EU to be part of a coordinated mediation effort, the EU Member States have to support and work through the EU;
- Systematically include mediation in the mandate of EU Special Representatives;
- Collect analysis from national civil society organisations active in peace processes to inform their work and brief colleagues at the EU's Political and Security Committee (PSC) regularly to increase the understanding of peace mediation inside the EU.

International civil society organisations should:

- Learn from the experience of the humanitarian sector in the 90ies where the growth of non-governmental actors involved in humanitarian response led to a proliferation of responses, unhelpful competition and waste of resources;
- Understand what the different international civil society organisations try to achieve in a

- specific conflict context;
- Share analysis at beginning of projects and at different stages of its implementation;
- Develop similar messages to avoid that conflict parties receive conflicting messages from different international actors involved in the peace process;
- Understand incentives for effective coordination, including the gains for all actors involved;
- Create platforms of civil society organization to exchange information, network and avoid competition or duplication;
- Acknowledge the challenges to coordination such as confidentiality requirements; thus, absence of coordination should not systematically be perceived as an unwillingness to co-operate;
- Approach international organisations and donors with proposals that can be realised in a given context.

National Ownership – balancing local and international approaches and interests

Lead Mediators should:

- Reach out to marginalized and/or proscribed groups either directly or indirectly;
- Critically probe parties on whether they have the intention of implementing the agreement;
- Strive for modest agreements that can be implemented and protect parties from signing peace agreements that are unrealistic;
- Defend the peace process and eventual agreement from external pressure and critique.

The EU should:

- Give priority to strengthening the mediation skills of local actors who are affected by conflict; innovative capacity-building models were developed by the Mediation Support Network in this respect;
- Support the link between all track levels which is crucial to national ownership;
- Focus on national ownership throughout the implementation stage and support the development of an implementation schedule and related mechanisms that are inclusive.

International civil society organisations should:

- Not act as gatekeepers but enable local civil society actors to access EU funding and to be involved in peace processes;
- Increase their accountability to local societies;
- Emphasize communication with the local society to avoid an elitist approach (e.g. through media channels).

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a three-year project co-funded by the European Union (Instrument for Stability) aimed at facilitating dialogue on peacebuilding issues between civil society and EU policymakers. The CSDN contributes to strengthening international and regional capacity for conflict prevention and post-conflict co-operation (for more information www.eplo.org). It is managed by EPLO, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office in cooperation with the EEAS and the EC.